

REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the Official Action dated February 22, 2006.

Claims 1-36 were pending in this application.

All claims were previously indicated as being allowable in the Ex Parte Quayle action dated April 5, 2005.

Claim 31 has been amended in two places to add the word "piece" after handguard for proper antecedent basis.

Drawings:

Item 1 of the Official Action indicated that the previously submitted drawings were improper because they were not labeled as amended. New drawings sheets with the proper annotations of (amended) are attached for entry into the file and review. Approval of the new drawing figures is respectfully solicited.

Support for claim changes:

Item 2 of the Official Action identified that the amendment filed May 23, 2005 lacked support for the claim changes/additional claims. A further statement regarding support for the claims changes is attached hereto as an annex. Each new claim has been repeated in the statement with appropriate reference numerals, figures numbers, and references to the specification where appropriate. Withdrawal of the objection and allowance of the application is respectfully solicited.

Supplemental Declaration:

Item 3 of the Official Action required a new declaration specifically identifying the most recent amendments to the application, and further required a more specific recitation of the error precipitating filing of the reissue application. A supplemental declaration is enclosed for entry into the file. Withdrawal of the objection and allowance of the application is respectfully solicited.

Accordingly, the present application is now believed to be in condition for allowance and ready for issue.

Corresponding action is respectfully solicited.

PTO is authorized to charge any additional fees incurred as a result of the filing hereof or credit any overpayment to our account #02-0900.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned should any questions arise.

Respectfully submitted,

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STATEMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.173(c)

Status of Claims and Support of Claims

The statements made below are for informational purposes only and are provided only to support newly entered claims 11-36 as required in the noted rules. These statements and references are provided as non-limiting examples of intended structure and are not intended to limit the claimed subject matter in any way.

1. original - no change
2. original - no change
3. currently amended - Claim 3 previously depended on claim 2. The dependency of claim 3 has been changed to now depend on independent claim 1. No further support is believed to be necessary.
4. currently amended - Claim 4 previously depended on claim 2. The dependency of claim 4 has been changed to now depend on independent claim 1. No further support is believed to be necessary.
5. currently amended - Claim 5 previously depended on claim 4. The dependency of claim 5 has been changed to now depend on independent claim 1. No further support is believed to be necessary.
6. original - no change
7. original - no change
8. currently amended - Claim 8 previously depended on claim 7. The dependency of claim 8 has been changed to now depend on independent claim 6. No further support is believed to be necessary.

9. currently amended - Claim 9 previously depended on claim 8. The dependency of claim 9 has been changed to now depend on independent claim 6. No further support is believed to be necessary.

10. currently amended - Claim 10 previously depended on claim 9. The dependency of claim 10 has been changed to now depend on independent claim 6. No further support is believed to be necessary.

11. new - A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm having a receiver 12, said receiver having a top 13 and a barrel receiving receptacle 160 at a forward end thereof, said firearm further including a barrel 16 received in said barrel receiving receptacle and a barrel nut 170 received around an outer surface of said barrel receiving receptacle to retain said barrel within said barrel receiving receptacle (see also Figs. 1, 4, 17 and 18), said system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4, wherein the underside 40 of the rear portion of the receiver sleeve is configured and arranged to be fixedly attached to the top of said firearm receiver (Fig. 4) (column 6, lines 37-40) and said forward portion of said receiver sleeve is configured to extend above at least a portion of the firearm barrel (Fig. 4);

a handguard piece 50 depending from the underside of the forward portion of the receiver sleeve 2, said handguard piece having a side wall 55 that forms a hollow interior cavity 58, a forward end, and a rearward end, wherein said sidewall of said handguard piece surrounds the firearm barrel without touching said barrel (See Figs. 6A-C), said rearward end of said handguard piece being adjacent said forward end of said receiver when said receiver sleeve is attached to said firearm receiver (Fig. 4); and

a yoke 180 (Figs. 21A-E, 22, 26A-E, 27) configured and arranged for engagement with said barrel nut 170, said yoke extending forwardly into said reward end of said handguard piece (Figs. 24, 25 and 29,30), said yoke being further configured and arranged for engagement with said rearward end of said handguard piece (fasteners 195 through apertures 188 and 163) (See Figs. 23A, 23B, 28A, 28B),

wherein said yoke supports said handguard piece relative to said receiver (Column 10, lines 15-35).

12. new - The system of claim 11 wherein said yoke 180 includes means (channel flange 190) for releasably engaging said barrel nut 170 (Figs. 24, 25, 29, 30), and further includes means for releasably engaging said rearward end of said handguard piece (fasteners 195 through apertures 188 and 163) (See Figs. 23A, 23B, 28A, 28B).

13. new - The system of claim 12 wherein said means for releasably engaging said barrel nut comprises a flange channel (see support in claim 12).

14. new - The system of claim 12 wherein said means for releasably engaging said rearward end of said handguard piece comprises a fastener extending through an aperture in said rearward end of the handguard piece, and into a threaded aperture in said yoke (see support in claim 12).

15. new - The system of claim 11, wherein said top side of said receiver sleeve 2 includes a dovetail interface element 22/23 extending longitudinally along at least a portion of the top of the receiver sleeve, said dovetail interface element being configured and arranged for the mounting of ancillary equipment.

16. new - The system of claim 11, further comprising:

at least one external dovetail interface element 90 (Figs. 4 and 6C) arranged on the sidewall of said handguard piece 50, said external dovetail element being configured and arranged for the mounting of ancillary equipment.

17. new - The system of claim 16 wherein said at least one external dovetail interface element 90 is removably secured (Fig. 9) to said sidewall of said handguard piece.

18. new - The system of claim 16, wherein said at least one external dovetail interface element 90 comprises:

three external dovetail interface elements 90 arranged on the sidewall of said handguard piece at 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 positions (See Figs. 4, 6A, 6B, 8, 10 and 16).

19. new - The system of claim 18 wherein said external dovetail interface elements 90 are removably secured to said sidewall of said handguard piece (See Figs 9, 11 and 12).

20. new - A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm having a receiver 12, said receiver having a top 13 and a barrel receiving receptacle 160 at a forward end thereof, said firearm further including a barrel 16 received in said barrel receiving receptacle and a barrel nut 170 received around an outer surface of said barrel receiving receptacle to retain said barrel within said barrel receiving receptacle (See also Figs. 1, 4, 17 and 18), said system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4, wherein the underside 40 of the rear portion of the receiver sleeve is configured and arranged to be fixedly attached to the top of said firearm receiver (See Fig. 4) (column 6, lines 37-40) and said forward portion of said receiver sleeve is configured to extend above at least a portion of the firearm barrel (Fig. 4);

an upper handguard piece 50 depending from the underside of the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2, said upper handguard piece having a side wall 55 that forms a hollow interior cavity 58, a forward end, and a rearward end, wherein said sidewall of said handguard piece at least partially surrounds the firearm barrel without touching said barrel (See Figs. 6A-6C), said rearward end of said handguard piece being adjacent said forward end of said receiver when said receiver sleeve is attached to said firearm receiver (Fig. 4); and

a yoke 180 (Figs. 21A-E, 22, 26A-E, 27)configured and arranged for engagement with said barrel nut 170, said yoke extending forwardly toward said reward end of said upper handguard piece, said yoke being further configured and arranged for engagement with said rearward end of said upper handguard piece (fasteners 195 through apertures 188 and 163) (See also Figs. 23A, 23B, 28A, 28B),

wherein said yoke supports said upper handguard piece relative to said receiver (Column 10, lines 15-35).

21. new - The system of claim 20 wherein said yoke includes means (channel flange 190) for releasably engaging said barrel nut, and further includes means for releasably engaging said rearward end of said upper handguard piece (fasteners 195 through apertures 188 and 163) (See also Figs. 23A, 23B, 28A, 28B).

22. new - The system of claim 21 wherein said means for releasably engaging said barrel nut comprises a flange channel (See support above in claim 21).
23. new - The system of claim 21 wherein said means for releasably engaging said rearward end of said upper handguard piece comprises a fastener extending through an aperture in said rearward end of the upper handguard piece, and into a threaded aperture in said yoke (See support above in claim 21).
- 24 . new - The system of claim 20, wherein said top side of said receiver sleeve 2 includes a dovetail interface element 22/23 extending longitudinally along at least a portion of the top of the receiver sleeve, said dovetail interface element being configured and arranged for the mounting of ancillary equipment.
25. new - The system of claim 20, further comprising:
at least one external dovetail interface element 90 (Figs. 4 and 6C) arranged on the sidewall of said handguard piece, said external dovetail element being configured and arranged for the mounting of ancillary equipment.
26. new - The system of claim 25 wherein said at least one external dovetail interface element 90 is removably secured (Fig. 9) to said sidewall of said handguard piece.
27. new - The system of claim 25, wherein said at least one external dovetail interface element 90 comprises:
three external dovetail interface elements arranged on the sidewall of said handguard piece at 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 positions (See Figs. 4, 6A, 6B, 8, 10 and 16).
28. new - The system of claim 27 wherein said external dovetail interface elements 90 are removably secured to said sidewall of said handguard piece (See Figs. 9, 11 and 12).

29. new - A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm including a receiver 12 having a forward portion and a top 13, and further including a barrel 16 joined to the forward portion of the receiver 12 (See also Figs. 1, 4, 17 and 18), said system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4, wherein the underside 40 of the rear portion 4 of the receiver sleeve 2 is configured and arranged to be fixedly attached to the top 13 of said firearm receiver 12 (Fig. 4)(column 6, lines 37-40) and said forward portion 3 of said receiver sleeve 2 is configured to extend above at least a portion of the firearm barrel 16 (See Figs. 1 and 4);

a handguard piece 50 depending from the underside of the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2, said handguard piece having a side wall 55 that forms a hollow interior cavity 58, a forward end, and a rearward end, wherein said sidewall of said handguard piece surrounds the firearm barrel 16 without touching said barrel (See Figs. 6A-6C), said rearward end of said handguard piece being adjacent said forward end of said receiver when said receiver sleeve is attached to said firearm receiver (Fig. 4); and

a yoke element 180 (Figs. 21A-E, 22, 26A-E, 27)coupled to said forward portion of said receiver 12, said yoke element 180 extending forwardly from said receiver 12 into said rearward end of said handguard piece 50 (Figs. 24, 25 29, 30), said yoke element being configured and arranged for engagement with said rearward end of said handguard piece (fasteners 195 through apertures 188 and 163) (See also Figs. 23A, 23B, 28A, 28B),

wherein said yoke element supports said handguard piece relative to said receiver (Column 10, lines 15-35).

30. new - A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm including a receiver 12 having a forward portion and a top 13, and further including a barrel 16 joined to the forward portion of the receiver (See also Figs. 1, 4, 17 and 18), said system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4, wherein the underside of the rear portion 4 of the receiver sleeve is configured and arranged to be fixedly attached to the top 13 of said firearm receiver 12 (Fig. 4)(column 6, lines 37-40) and said forward portion of said receiver sleeve is configured to extend above at least a portion of the firearm barrel (See Fig. 4);

a handguard piece 50 depending from the underside of the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2, said handguard piece having a side wall 55 that forms a hollow interior cavity 58, a forward end, and a rearward end, wherein said sidewall of said handguard piece surrounds the firearm barrel without touching said barrel (See Figs. 6A-6C), said rearward end of said handguard piece being adjacent said forward end of said receiver when said receiver sleeve is attached to said firearm receiver (See Fig. 4); and

a supporting element 180 engaged with said forward portion of said receiver 12, said supporting element extending forwardly from said forward portion of said receiver into said rearward end of said handguard piece (Figs. 24, 25, 29, 30), said supporting element being configured and arranged for engagement with said rearward end of said handguard piece (fasteners 195 through apertures 188 and 163) (See also Figs. 23A, 23B, 28A, 28B),

wherein said supporting element supporting said handguard piece relative to said receiver (Column 10, lines 15-35).

31. new - A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm having a receiver 12, said receiver having a top 13 and a barrel receiving receptacle 160 at a forward end thereof, said firearm further including a barrel 16 received in said barrel receiving receptacle 160 and a barrel nut 170 received around an outer surface of said barrel receiving receptacle to retain said barrel within said barrel receiving receptacle (See Figs. 1, 4, 17, 18), said system comprising:

an upper handguard piece 50 having a forward end and a rearward end, and further having a dovetail rail 131 (Fig. 15) extending longitudinally between the forward end and the rearward end;

a U-shaped supporting yoke 180 removably secured to said rearward end of said upper hand guard piece (fasteners 195 through apertures 188 and 163) (See also Figs. 23A, 23B, 28A, 28B),

said U-shaped supporting yoke including engagement surfaces 181, 182, 190 configured to cooperatively engage an outer surface of said barrel nut 170 and thereby support said upper handguard piece 50 relative to said barrel nut 170 (Column 10, lines 15-35),

wherein said upper handguard extends from said forward end of said upper receiver forwardly above said barrel without engaging said barrel (Figs. 6A-6C).

32. new - The system of claim 31, wherein said upper handguard piece 50 includes opposing side walls 55 that extend outwardly and downwardly from said dovetail rail, said opposing side walls terminating in opposing interface channels 61 (Figs. 5, 6A-6C).

33 new - The system of claim 32 wherein each of said longitudinally extending interface channels 61 has a lower wall, and said lower wall comprises a plurality of spaced wall segments 66 (Fig. 5).

34. new - The system of claim 31 further comprising a bottom firearm accessory (bottom handguard 70), said upper handguard piece 50 and said bottom firearm accessory 70 including interfitting mating formations (protrusions 82 and channels 61) for removably securing said bottom firearm accessory to said upper handguard piece (See Figs. 5, 7, 13).

35. new - The system of claim 32 further comprising a bottom firearm accessory 70 having opposing side walls 75 that extend outwardly and upwardly, said opposing sidewalls including protrusions 82 that interfittingly engage within said interface channels 61 (See Figs. 5, 7, 13).

36. new - The system of claim 33 further comprising a bottom firearm accessory 70 having opposing sidewalls 75 that extend outwardly and upwardly, said opposing sidewalls including protrusions 82 that interfittingly engage within said interface channels 61, said protrusions comprising a plurality of spaced protrusions that matingly interfit between said spaced wall segments 66 (Figs. 5, 7, 13).